

DIALOGUES OF FOUR PASSIONS

NATIS

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HASSO WEIß EHRENWERTH

COMING TO TERMS WITH *HIM* • MATTI
ARRIVAL AND THE CONVERGENCE
FIGURING OUT HOW TO PAINT
PAINTING BEHAVIOUR
MODIFICATION TOOL
THE GHOST AND THE GEIST
CEREMONY • FITTING OUT • DEBUT

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COMING TO TERMS WITH *HIM*

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Natis
Hasan
Hank

Screen Scene: Lübbener Str. ■, Hinterhaus, 2. OG, Left.

Stage Scene: Minimal decoration. Preferably spaceless and dark. The dramatic characters are seated around a round table facing each other. A single spotlight illuminates the table.

Time: Hasan's first birthday since the German unspeakables in and about the Middle East started.

Dialogue: Most of the text represents the inner voice(s) of the protagonist—the artist with a lowercase *a* or the painter— and is meant to be performed live on the main stage, reflecting the interiority of his mind or the stream of his psychic thoughts. Lines marked with *aside* suggest spoken, phonetic interactions between characters or simple utterances in the protagonist's external physical world, differing from the conventional use of this signifier in classical dramatic texts. In classical texts, *aside* typically refers to a character speaking from the periphery of the main action, privately to themselves or directly to the audience, indicating a mental evaluation or inner thoughts. In this text, however, *aside* signifies lines spoken aloud between characters or as a monologue in the social world. The *aside* lines are expected to be played on film and projected as moving images on a screen beside the main stage.

HASSO WEIß EHRENWERTH: COMING TO TERMS WITH HIM

Screen Scene: It is home, and it is the biological birthday of the body. Natis takes a deep breath to summon all his passions to reevaluate Hasan's life experiences in Cyprus and Germany regarding the German unspeakables in and about the Middle East.

NATIS

This is not one of your favourite days, Hasan. What's more, Germany's being *great* again. But, don't we feel something more?

HASAN
(nervous)

The body feels tired and a headache is starting.

HANK
(worried)

Yes!

NATIS

We generally have migraines. The aura type. Is this how we feel when they start?

HASAN

No! This specific pain comes from the depths of the brain, not around it, and the nausea is almost like food poisoning; it shivers the body; a humming in the ears, rhythmic, almost like a hymn.

This one is similar to how I felt when Hank's existence was becoming clearer in my singular, monadic life back then. Until I named Hank and accepted it, I suffocated.

The same thing happened when you came too, Natis.

This one is leading towards that kind of pain.

HANK

You shouldn't have resisted that much. Sorry that I was such pain in the posterior.

HASAN

Yeah! But I didn't know much about myself—ourselves— in those days.

HANK

Obviously!

We were much quicker with your arrival Natis, thanks to Hasan's

experience with me. So, the pain was too rapid for me to remember.

NATIS

Okay. What are you saying, Hasan?

HASAN

(nervously)

Another one is coming!? A breaking point for another change in our lives!?

HANK

(anxious)

Who?

NATIS

I thought so too! Let's be quick. It is getting worse.

HASAN

(bitterly)

Do not worry, Hank!
This is the last one.
You know who is coming!

HANK

The last one!? Do I?
Ugh!
Name it then!

HASAN

(disappointed)

Yes! But, you must know who we are talking about, right?

HANK

Who? Does this newcomer have anything to do with the recent *greatness* of Germany?

NATIS

I suppose the *unspeakables* made everything more obvious and accelerated His arrival, as He already existed, lurking beneath every surface. Including under our body's internal landscape!
We always heard Him whispering from afar. His unclear but poisonous words have clear effects on the body.
Maybe it is time to stop resisting Him.

HANK
(frustrated)

Who is it?

NATIS
The *ultimate* Artist, Hank! *He* is the reason for it all. The resonance between the material realities and the aesthetics. The Staatsräson and the European dream. Even if *He* appears to be critical at times. *He* is the psychic implantation in every creative person's mind.

HANK
Oh! I see. You always talk about this *Artist* with the capitalised A.
(confused)
But didn't we all exist despite and because of *Him*? Because of a certain distance we have had to *Him*? How can we co-exist now? How can we keep working as we normally do, if *His* poisonous words will become clearer to the ears? Won't we feel more of an imposter than ever?

HASAN
Mmmm. Natis's strategy is to keep the enemy closer, I guess.

NATIS
We must be co-workers now. Don't you see?
But, I would not go that far and say *He's* the only reason that made us come into being. We are more than that, aren't we?

HANK
How do you know this is the last one?

NATIS
We'd know if there was another between the drives of the *paintingwriting* and *sexualsensualities* within us...

HASAN
(whispering)
Maybe it is the last one in Germany!?

NATIS
...Also, how much longer could we keep holding on to these theatrics as if we exist independent from *Him* and as if we were better than *Him*?

HANK
Aren't we, though?

NATIS

Ethically? Maybe. But, based on morals!? That's tricky. The problem and the point of welcoming Him now is that we must overcome our self-perception of being *morally* superior. It is a dangerous place to be, only leading to intellectual decline.

(frustrated)

Ugh! The pain is intensifying. I'll vomit!

I mean, the superiority we assume no longer benefits us just by simply opposing Him. It can not be that straightforward! Don't you think?

The urge and the need to secure a place that is superior as a result of endless resentment and futile attempts to win this war between Him and us is a new kind of Neurosis and distortion. We shouldn't feel imposter, nor inferior—I know we can't help it—but the way not to feel this way can't be through holding onto this delusional ascendancy, which is just a series of predictably different behaviours trying to signify the same power He possesses. These predictable rhetorics in our visual and textual discourse are all in the fabric of His reality. So, whatever we do leads to His perpetuation in the existing material realities.

HANK

I'm not quite grasping it! But I guess that's fine! I have only one fear about this co-working situation. And that is, if I agree on this, I might slowly disappear!? Hasan would too! What if He'd consume everything we've built, everything we've become?

I want to keep working and I want to keep working as I have always been working. I desire to keep *remembering the future* — keep narrating and painting the *Oblivials*.

HASAN

Same! I don't see a point in changing my way of painting. I also wanna keep my research into the *past* and the *speculations about the unknowns of that past*.

Is co-working the only way? Really?

NATIS

You are right about your fears. It is not about surrender but knowing the reception and use of your practices in this culturally narcissistic society; knowing how your art-making strategies turn into material values reduced to something only signals a sort of morality to be bought and commodified by anyone who urges its temporary gratification. You aim for the rewards in the same order that gives only alms with a little sense of pride and illusion of moral high grounds and pays a fortune for those following His literal footsteps. But I explain this not to tell you and your

modi operandi to disappear. I think if we have Him to collaborate with us; if we establish Him within an unorthodox proximity to us we can discover positions where we'll be less manipulated and conditioned, therefore your narratives will be better fleshed out.

At a certain distance, He becomes more manipulative and keeps us ruminating in the comfort zone of our beloved and believed-to-be unshakable intellectual faculties. Then, being undoubtedly sure about ourselves means corruption on a personal level. Having Him closer to us will help us have a self-reflective point of view to check our own intentions.

HANK

Fine. As long as accepting Him doesn't mean to disappear, I'll go along. I don't need to know the details! But I'm telling you, if I start fading away or losing my edge, I'm blaming you.

HASAN

Natis! Are you sure that we *can* co-exist?

NATIS

I believe our — well, YOUR — work will be even more effective once we overcome the intellectual drowsiness of righteousness induced by the symbolic rewards offered by the cultural industry, which only seems to dismantle Him in a representative manner that remains centered around Him.

And to be honest! Look at this world overflowing with sextillions of artists who continue to innovate on the surface of the art-*objects* with the legacy of that very Subject of Reason. I firmly believe we must approach the Artist — this invented being — in the same playful manner as we have for a long time with the art-*objects*. What is needed to advance art-making is not to stab the canvas any longer, but to gash that *contrived spirit* which claims to be the sole master of the correlation between the mind and the hand. Since Fontana, everyone has been doing the craziest things one can imagine to the art-*objects*.

(sarcastic crying)

Oh, poor art-mediums!

Also, as we feel deeply unwell now, there's no other alternative. Either we stay in pain or accept Him.

HASAN

I have to tell you. I am not fully convinced. However, we aren't well. Let's cut the chase and try to understand Him in relation to the body. Who is He? Where is He from? What is His name?

NATIS

Above all — most pivotally: What possibly are we with and without Him?

Hasan! You happened to be the first layer of primary punctures' coating-crust over our body's psychic skin. And, if not entirely, a good portion of these primordial scars were engendered by Him, mediated through the *caregivers* of the body from its organic beginnings. I want you to guide us in answering these questions. Please name and narrate Him for us.

HASAN

Oh ok! Let me think a little! It is hard to concentrate when the head feels like splitting in half!

NATIS

Okay. Take your time. Also, please don't misinterpret my words, which you tend to do. By saying that you are the first primary punctures' coating as an epistemological clotting or sedimentation on this particular body we share, doesn't mean you are more original. The very coating always needs an already-existing material, a mythic and socio-symbolic matter — a system of knowledge that still functions from the residues of a very feudalistic mindset — to be there in the first place for you to choose, select, and coat over these holes. Being the first stratum in the total sedimentation of this *body of strata* might give you the feeling that you are more original than any of us. But you are both as fictitious and as factual.

HASAN

I fall into that trap quite often as everyone around us calls us by my name, which is a word that repeats, and by its repetition, makes me feel I am more...

Well! Appreciate the heads-up!

Alright, so! What comes to my mind is *Hasso*... as the first name!

NATIS

(Smiling in pain)

A German pet name!?

HANK

He is not good at finding names, but we already feel a little better now!

HASAN

Wait! It will make sense. You will like it! I Promise!

And why do you ask me to lead, only to mock me from the very start?

NATIS

Sorry! You are right!

HASAN

Hasso is a choice rooted in our body's personal and historical significance. Although Hasso is now an old-fashioned name in Germany that fell out of use, it carries a profound resonance for me as an alien in this country. When I was a child, my mother affectionately called me Hasso, a cute variation of my name. Furthermore, there is *Hasso von Manteuffel*! Von Manteuffel was a high-ranking Wehrmacht general who served the Nazi regime, known for his strategic roles in battles during World War II. In 1959, Manteuffel was charged and convicted of war crimes —he was known for exceeding his powers as a divisional commander— for ordering the execution of a *deserter* in 1944 and sentenced to eighteen months in prison. Despite all, Manteuffel remained active in post-war Germany, serving as a member of the Bundestag for the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and later for the German Party—the nationalist, conservative, monarchist political organisation with strong nostalgic sentiments for a German Empire. In addition, Manteuffel contributed to the further development of the Bundeswehr, lectured about warfare in various climatic conditions at the United States Military Academy, and worked as an adviser on war films. By reclaiming this name, I aim to highlight these unsettling continuities and provoke reflection on the historical shadows that still influence today's Germany. The simultaneous tension in this word — its phonetic effect making our body feel at home while evoking the connotations of a disturbing history — led me to my decision! I think it fits Him very well... as He will be an embodiment, a reflection, and a version of that suppressive socio-economical creative subject —of the Artist— in our body!

The notion of Artist, this modern Subject, regulates creative abilities based on an inhuman ideal for the Human, who, in turn, embodies the regulatory ideals of the human organism as a biological and cultural — or naturcultural — category...
What do you think?

NATIS

Häämmm! It is harsh! But I see you.

With your last sentence, you also draw our attention to the epistemic materialisation of sexual-biological markers through gendering by repetitively using the phrase *regulatory ideal*, attributed to the bald French genealogist of power with browline glasses. As Man and Woman are social inventions that contaminate the collective meaning of these bodily markers and the ways we interact with genitalia, so too is the

Artist for the creativity of the human organism, expressed and materialised through the hands as appendage organs. Overall, the historical notion of the Human needed additional concepts, such as Man and Woman, or the Artist, to constitute and stabilise itself.

Probably, there are more derivatives of such modern Subjects. Scientist? You name it!

But the Artist is more kin to the Human than any of them!

Nevertheless, resisting Him with already existing, defused, and irradicalised or domesticated methodologies means putting Him on a pedestal without knowing.

HASAN

I still do not think my practice is irradicalised, nor is domesticated.

HANK

Me neither! Don't you think affirming Him by accepting Him to our co-working team will repulse our audience?

And what about the surname?

NATIS

(sarcastically)

You do not have that much of an audience. Do you? Notwithstanding, the audience should come to terms with their complicities as well. Therefore, maybe they should reflect on why they would feel repulsed about our collaboration with Him in the first place! Everyone loves Him and creates secret sexual and artistic alliances with Him, yet they expect their superficial critical discourse to dismantle Him!? It is a hypocrisy.

HASAN

(raising eyebrows)

You are still talking about us, ha!?

HANK

Why do you dislike our paintings?

NATIS

I just distrust anyone connected to the cultural industry that capitalises on victimhood. Its rewarding mechanism might well affect *YOUR* relationship with *YOUR* artistic explorations of *YOUR* remembering practices. That is why I think He will refresh your way of doing things!

HANK
(bitterly)

What about the surname?

HASAN
(giving indifferent mood)

Surname is the easiest!

NATIS
Oh, Maine Güte! Will you do that? Germanising your surname?

HASAN
(laughing)

Yes!

NATIS
(smiling)

Weiß Ehrenwerth?! The father was ambitious wanting to have that kind of name.

HASAN
(proudly)

So, is He coming into the picture now?

HANK
Wow! This one suits Him very well too.

NATIS
Exactly! Tell us about His life. I guess after uttering His biography, we will feel even better.

HASAN
Given the body's Cypriot heritage, the island's ongoing British influence, and its experiences in Germany, I sense Him being half-British and half-German.

HANK
What kind of experiences are you talking about? These happened before my arrival. I sense them bitterly, but I don't have access to clear memories. Give me one example!

HASAN
One constitutive memory is when I was only Hasan while studying at KHB Berlin. A Neo-Nazi student painted me, my likeness, as a half-

human, half-animal monster awaiting entry into a *concentration camp*, the door of which was labelled with the motto *Arbeit Macht Freigeist*.

NATIS
(grinning)

Yeah! The university where your studio professor was describing detail-wise invested paintings as *Mädchen-Malerei*. You were her favourite student (!)

HASAN
(sarcastically)

Yes. That university.

So, the *-geist* ending of the labeled door representation led to a lack of support; only a few students stood by me, and none of the professors intervened, for it had to be *Arbeit Macht Frei* instead, for it to be a real KZ. So, it was not a concentration camp for their reasoning.

The rector back then, a member of *Die Linke*, dismissed my concerns, stating *Art Should Be Free* and citing *Jonathan Meese* as the epitome of the freedom of speech in Germany. I was to be lectured. This response highlighted a troubling conflation of *hate speech* with *freedom of expression*, particularly as the *Berliner Senate* also downplayed the incident after I reported it with an association's help.

Regardless of my beliefs and despite my nonreligious upbringing, I was just a *Hasan*: How can a *Hasan* come from a godless family? How could a *Hasan*, a non-Jewish person, be subject to discrimination with an antisemitic symbol?

The problem for the university was not the structures that protect a Neo-Nazi individual or that he depicted a concentration camp that would upset Jewish people who live in Germany, *BUT* the attempt of *censorship* towards the *freedom of speech* by a Muslim man: *the Hasan*!

Would they react the same way if *Hasan* was the one who depicted a KZ? Would that still be seen as *freedom of speech*?

NATIS

Now, I will repeat myself, and you will not like it: In the Arts, such biases manifest with the political economies' fetishization processes and are no different than those of libidinal ones. What they need is a compliant, good immigrant or a queer artist to reinforce their narrative of progression. The funding system spared for *YOU-kind-of-artists* often feels like a superficial gesture driven by *guilt*, designed to maintain a facade of *diversity* while perpetuating the existing order. The support offered usually aims to *tame* your methodologies with those rewards turning your existence into *suffering porn* for those who feel guilty and

who seek to wash their sins *transcendentally* with euphoric intellectual ejaculations.

HANK | HASAN
(Briefly side-eyeing each other)

HANK
So, if a *hate speech* is delivered in Europe's one and only sacred material—the oil paint—it turns it into a *freedom of expression*?

NATIS
Yes. But, it is only sacred and has the power to freedom of speech if you are a baptised person or assumed to be one. Our body does not have the same power and agency over this material. When we touch it, it becomes profane!

HANK
Is it tolerable to be racist and anti-Muslim but not antisemitic to them!?

HASAN
And imagine! *This school rector was also a director of a major funding institution for Arts.*

HANK
Ups!

NATIS
This anecdote of Hasan's experience is just a personal one. There are also such things concerning Arts with its greater sense as a domain of freedom:
Still-ongoing Winkelmanian historical bleaching narrative of the polychromy on ancient Greek sculptures and architecture; the effects of Adolf Loos's 1908 criminalization of ornamentation as a sign of underdeveloped culture; the contrasting definitions like Primitives versus Primitivists; or—the recent x-ray-discovery of a painted bigoted sentence found under Mr. Malevich's Black Square, namely *the zero point of painting!*
These are still big belief systems in the Arts that perpetuate Him as an ideal.
Brian O'Doherty's *Notes on the Ideology of the White-Cube* is a good critique I love. What is the *subject-equivalence* of the White-Cube from O'Doherty's perspective? No one has yet really deeply deconstructed it!

HANK
(impatient)

We feel a little better, but not completely.

NATIS
Yeah, Hank! We were about to narrate His biography but caught up in your curiosity about the memories and my endless babbling. Can we start with a short bio, now?

HASAN
Mmmm.
We should have already started hearing or sensing Him clearer by now.

NATIS
His voice should have been more pronounced after the naming.

HASAN
Exactly! I don't know what is going on! We still have quite a piercing headache.

HANK
Concentrate!

...

HASAN
Nothing!
Doesn't work!

HANK
What is going on? Are we going to be feeling like this forever?

NATIS
Of course not! We always find a solution!

HASAN
Do the *unspeakables* weaken us?

NATIS
Yeah! Maybe!

HASAN
Let's go to bed! We try again in the morning!

NATIS
No Instagram or the news, please!

HANK
Good idea! Learn from me!
Sweet Dreams!

NATIS
Night Night!

HASAN
Eyi Geceler, dadlılar!

...Zzz

Screen Scene: The next morning, in bed.

HANK | HASAN | NATIS (Aside)
(surprised)
The same dream again!?
Why do we keep seeing my protagonist's dream sequence from my
short story all the time?
Was that Matti?

HASAN
What do you mean?

NATIS
I think the faceless version of the Messiah has started to have the facial
features of Matti in the dream!

HASAN
No, no, I don't think so!

MATTI

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Natis
Hasan
Hank
Matti
Young Women on the Counter

Screen Scene: At the Saaldeck Café on Karl-Marx-Allee.

Stage Scene: Minimal decoration. Preferably spaceless and dark. The dramatic characters are seated around a round table facing each other. A single spotlight illuminates the table.

Time: Eight weeks of Natis feeling unwell because of the unsuccessful arrival of Hasso into His bodily situatedness.

Dialogue: Most of the text represents the inner voice(s) of the protagonist—the artist with a lowercase *a* or the painter— and is meant to be performed live on the main stage, reflecting the interiority of his mind or the stream of his psychic thoughts. Lines marked with *aside* suggest spoken, phonetic interactions between characters or simple utterances in the protagonist's external physical world, differing from the conventional use of this signifier in classical dramatic texts. In classical texts, *aside* typically refers to a character speaking from the periphery of the main action, privately to themselves or directly to the audience, indicating a mental evaluation or inner thoughts. In this text, however, *aside* signifies lines spoken aloud between characters or as a monologue in the social world. The *aside* lines are expected to be played on film and projected as moving images on a screen beside the main stage.

HASSO WEISS EHRENWERTH: MATTI

Screen Scene: Matti's face revealed itself clearly in the repetitive dream, and the next day, Natis urged Matti to get together. They meet for coffee at the Saaldeck Café on Karl Marx Allee. It is a sunny but freezing winter day in Berlin. Natis has been unwell for about eight weeks since he attempted to come to terms with the idea of co-working with Hasso but failed. Natis takes painkillers just to barely function, as headaches and nausea are persistent.

NATIS (Aside)

What would you like to drink?

MATTI (Aside)

I'll take a Milchkaffee.

NATIS (Aside)

Would you like a piece of cake?

MATTI (Aside)

Let me see! This one does look delicious. Does it not? Let's share a piece of this one!

NATIS (Aside)

Normally, I'd eat it all, but I don't feel well! I can maybe have a small bite. Ich hätte gerne eine Tasse Kaffeeschwarz und ein Stück von diesem Kuchen hier, bitte!

YOUNG WOMAN ON THE COUNTER (Aside)

Ja, klar! Milchkaffee auch, oder?

NATIS (Aside)

Oh! Ja! Bitte!

MATTI (Aside)

Yeah, you mentioned that you don't feel good. What's happening? Have you seen your doctor?

YOUNG WOMAN ON THE COUNTER (Aside)

Wie möchtest du bezahlen?

NATIS (Aside)

No, but I know what it is, and it's not contagious. Don't worry! Ich werd' bitte mit Karte bezahlen.

MATTI (Aside)

How do you know it's not contagious if you haven't seen a doctor?

YOUNG WOMAN ON THE COUNTER (Aside)

Ab 10 Euro ist die Kartenzahlung möglich!

NATIS (Aside)

Na gut! Dann sollen wir noch etwas besorgen. Können wir bitte eine Flasche Sprudelwasser bekommen?

MATTI (Aside)

(worried)

Ich mag kein Wasser mit Kohlensäure.

NATIS (Aside)

Bitte, Stattdessen eine Flasche stilles Wasser!

HASAN

Here we go. She's not happy!

NATIS

Whatever! She can very well find another job if she is not happy here. I also work in gastronomy! I deal with worse nonsense from my customers, and I keep smiling!

HASAN

(laughing)

You aren't always nice to your customers either. Also! You pushed me away and took charge of this body in daily life; you changed your name to Natis... but: You still look like a *Hasan*.

NATIS

Well said! But you were angrier than I am!

HASAN

I was always right when I was angry!

NATIS

Sure!

YOUNG WOMAN ON THE COUNTER (Aside)

Okay! Jetzt!

Halt bitte deine Karte an die vordere Seite des Geräts.

NATIS (Aside)

Ah! So!
Genehmigt?

YOUNG WOMAN ON THE COUNTER (Aside)

Jo! Danke!

NATIS (Aside)

Danke auch!

MATTI (Aside)

How do you know it's not contagious?

NATIS (Aside)

Yes! Ämm! I can tell you, but you'll probably think I've lost my marbles!

MATTI (Aside)

(smiling)

It's okay, babe! You wouldn't be the only one who's lost her marbles in my life.

Screen Scene: Matti pokes the cake with his finger and licks it slowly.

HASAN

Ew, that's nasty! Why did he do that?

NATIS

Come on! It is not that bad!

HASAN

For me, it is!

Anyways!

Maybe you don't have to be completely honest with him!

HANK

Are we telling Matti about the debilitating analities of our painting practices? How have they intensified since the German unspeakables in and about the Middle East? I mean, look at Hasan's last series! He is extra anal and meticulous about precision and knowledge. I don't even know, to be honest, why it affects me the same way it does affect Hasan.

NATIS

No Hank! More about the multiple voices in my head.

HASAN

But, I like how my meticulousness intensified in my painting style!

HANK

I don't think Matti would like to hear all of this!

NATIS

I need to share this with Matti since we keep having this dream about him.

HASAN

Most of your best friends make fun of you! Even *they* don't believe you! Why do you think this will be different for Matti?

NATIS

Because of the dream.

HASAN

Let us then try to tell him.

NATIS (Aside)

Alright, Matti! You know I have these so-called *alter egos* through which I materialise my art. Right?

MATTI (Aside)

Yes!

NATIS (Aside)

They are more than fictitious! They are somewhat extra-factual or para-fictional. I mean both fiction and factual.

MATTI (Aside)

Ookayyy!

NATIS (Aside)

I might be suffering from a condition, but there's a reason I'm here today. I wanted to meet you because I've been having the same dream for the last eight weeks—over and over again. There was a faceless figure in it, and over the course of those eight weeks, this faceless man developed your facial features.

Really? MATTI (Aside)

Yes! NATIS (Aside)

Hasan! Sorry, Natis! Wait... A dream? MATTI (Aside)
(confused)

Yes! I'll explain! NATIS (Aside)

No! Wait a minute! MATTI (Aside)

...

I just started to recall something, once you mentioned the *dream*! It is insane!

What? Why? NATIS (Aside)
(shocked)

I think I, too, see a repetitive dream with you in it. I generally don't remember my dreams, but... MATTI (Aside)

No! No, no! What is the dream? Tell me! NATIS (Aside)

I don't remember fully. MATTI (Aside)

Your nose bleeding!? NATIS (Aside)

You wipe your nose on a piece of cloth!?
The fabric starts floating in the air!?
Your blood moves in the fibres of the cloth, and forms a square!?

MATTI (Aside)
(gasping)

What the hell! Yes!

NATIS (Aside)
(excited)

That is the proof I have been looking for, for a long time.

...
Okay, wait! I want to read a few passages from Hasan's painting series, *The Veil* (2023). Just give me a second! I will find it from the Could! You will see what I mean...

MATTI (Aside)

Okay!

...

NATIS (Aside)

Here we go:

"HER ATTACKS ALWAYS STARTED AS AN INTERNAL WAR-LIKE RUMBLE IN HER HEAD AND ENDED WITH A SUDDEN SILENCE, LIKE RIGHT AFTER A WATERDROP FALLS INTO A PUDDLE ♦ UNLIKE OTHER CHILDREN, HOWEVER, BETWEEN THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF HER ATTACKS, SHE WAS IN VIVID VISIONS ♦ THE EXACT SAME PERIODIC DREAM:

A PIECE OF CLOTH WITH WHICH SHE WIPES HER BLEEDING NOSE ♦ THE FABRIC STARTS SWIMMING, MOVING IN THE AIR AS IF ALIVE, WITH THE TOUCH OF HER BLOOD ♦ THE WET REDNESS MOVES IN THE FIBRES OF THE FLOATING, DANCING CLOTH WHICH TAKES MANY DIFFERENT SHAPES, FOLDS, AND CURVES; IT DRAWS A LINE AND COMPLETES A SIMPLE SQUARE ♦ THOUGH HER BLOOD FINDS ITS FINAL FIGURE AND POSITION ON THE TEXTILE, THE BOUNDARIES OF ALL ITS FOUR EQUAL SIDES KEEP FLUCTUATING ♦"

MATTI (Aside)
(nervous)

Fuck me! Are you kidding me?

NATIS (Aside)

I am not, there is more:

"IN THE SQUARE, SHE SEES COUNTLESS AMOUNTS OF FACES FROM THE TIMES AHEAD ♦ FRONTAL AND WELL-LIT ♦ ARROGANT AND HAUGHTY ♦ THEN HER VISION CUTS DOWN TO TWO SPECIFIC FACES ♦ THE PROPHETS ♦ SHE SEES THEM

FROM AFAR AND SIMULTANEOUSLY THROUGH BOTH OF THEIR EYES ♦ THEY HAVE DARK SKIN AND SLIM FACES WITH BLACK CURLY HAIR ♦ THEY LOOK ALIKE ♦ NOT IDENTICAL, BUT SIMILAR, JUST LIKE THE LANGUAGES THEY SPEAK ♦ THEY DEBATE HEATEDLY IN DISTINCT BUT RELATED LANGUAGES ♦ THEY ARE SWEATING AND BLEEDING ♦ THEY BEGIN TO COME CLOSER AS THEY CONVERSE ♦ WITH EACH STEP FORWARD, THEIR LANGUAGES TRANSFORM INTO A THIRD COMMON ONE ♦ IT IS TOO DISTINCT BUT AGAIN SIMILAR TO THE FIRST TWO EACH HAD BEEN SPEAKING ♦

NOW EVEN CLOSER, THEY TALK CALMLY AND GENTLY WITH THE SAME TONGUE ♦ THEIR LIPS ARE ABOUT TO MEET ♦ THEY SHUT THEIR EYES ♦ THE WARMTH OF THEIR BREATHS THAT COMES FROM THE VOWELS OF THEIR WHISPERING WORDS WINDS AROUND THEIR MOUTHS ♦ UNEXPECTEDLY DRY, A RUGGED FEELING ON THEIR LIPS INTERVENES ♦ THEY OPEN THEIR EYES, SEEING A BLOODY SQUARE ON A PIECE OF CLOTH BETWEEN THEIR FACES ♦ SUDDENLY, IT COVERS THE WHOLE HEAD OF ONE OF THEM, FROM HIS NECK UP, AND CHOKES HIM ♦ FOR HE HAS NOT YET BEEN BORN, HE DISAPPEARS ♦ THE OTHER ONE BLACKOUTS ♦”

Was it similar?

MATTI (Aside)

The more you read, the more I remembered.

Yes! It was very similar. It was just that it was you and me, instead of... What did you say?

The prophets.

NATIS (Aside)

There is no way for you to know the story. You haven't been to the exhibition!

Were you able to see my face every time?

Oh, babe! Are you ok? You look pale!

MATTI (Aside)

(tapping foot)

I am not ok!

...

I must go to the bathroom!

Oh my! NATIS (Aside)

MATTI (Aside)
(retching)

Babe! Should I come with you? NATIS (Aside)

...

What's going on? HASAN
(confused)

Matti seems to have the same symptoms. HANK

Hmm! NATIS

So, Matti feels like us and sees the same dream, as we do. HASAN

Is it a convergence? Are we merging, or what? HANK

I mean, he is not a stereotypical German. But I still don't know, *why HIM?* HASAN
(suspiciously)

Screen Scene: Matti comes back and sits at the table.

Hey! Do you feel better? NATIS (Aside)

No! I have an ache coming from the depths of my head! And I still feel I MATTI (Aside)

need to vomit! What is going on? What's happening? Why do we see the same dream, and now that I remember them... Why am I ill, like you are? Didn't you say this isn't contagious?

NATIS (Aside)

Babe! It isn't a virus! And believe me, I didn't expect this either. I just knew that I had to meet you after seeing this dream. And I think I know why!

MATTI (Aside)

I am terrified Natis! What on earth is going on?

NATIS (Aside)

I had similar symptoms when I was only Hasan and got to encounter Hank for the first time. I resisted its existence in my body! It took a while to figure out. I visited doctors from various disciplines, and they had no idea. Tests came back normal. I was healthy. Do you want to go outside for some fresh air?

MATTI (Aside)

No! Go on!

NATIS (Aside)

Eventually, I discovered its voice in my head; I couldn't believe it! But the more I listened to it, the more the symptoms went away. The more I believed in it, that there was another in me, in my mind, the better I felt! Finally, when I named it, I got better. And its voice became clearer. We had conversations and debates!

MATTI (Aside)

You sound insane!

NATIS (Aside)

I know! But the dialogues between Hank and Hasan gradually helped me understand *who* Hasan was, or *what* he was, even though he came first and felt more like *me* than Hank: I realised he was also an entity in my head. But I only noticed it when his voice began shifting from the centre within every dialogue I had and every painting I made with Hank; replacing itself with *another*. That shift was the reason I changed my name. I had to!

MATTI (Aside)

What does *Natis* mean again?

NATIS (Aside)

It means *no one*. It's wishful thinking, I suppose. But this name helped me navigate between these voices!

Flash forward: Eight weeks ago, I started to feel the same way I did when I first met Hank, or when I realised Hasan's life was also para-fictional! With each of these processes, I was as sick as I am today and managed to fix it by accepting their para-fictionality or extra-factuality. This time, even though I'd been through this twice before, I couldn't fix it.

Then, I started to have these dreams.

MATTI (Aside)

How did you fix the symptoms before?

NATIS (Aside)

By listening to them and then narrating with them.

I let the outside world pour into me and merge with my interior landscape to be a well of stories to flow back to life.

I understand why this technique isn't working this time!

MATTI (Aside)

Why?

NATIS (Aside)

Because, I reckon, this one will reside within both of us.

It will invoke both of our bodies and channel them at times, but only when we let it do so! It is not like being completely possessed. We can bestow the control but revoke it anytime.

MATTI (Aside)

This all sounds very lunatic! Do you understand?

NATIS (Aside)

We must try.

MATTI (Aside)

Try what?

NATIS (Aside)

Hasso Weiß Ehrenwerth!

MATTI (Aside)

Is it its name?

NATIS (Aside)
We must go somewhere quiet to concentrate and narrate together for Him to arrive. It will make us feel better. Would you try it?

MATTI (Aside)
(frustrated)

NATIS (Aside)
There is no other way, Matti. We must try. Do you mind going to my studio?

MATTI (Aside)
(nodding)
I can't think straight!

NATIS (Aside)
(smiling by air quoting)
Of course, you can't think *straight!*.
Do you need Ibu?

MATTI (Aside)
Do you have any?

NATIS (Aside)
Here!
...
And here's a glass of water. Take it, and let's go!

ARRIVAL AND THE CONVERGENCE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Natis
Hasan
Hank
Hasso
Matti

Screen Scene: At the Studio of Natis on Ohlauer Str. 36.

Stage Scene: Minimal decoration. Preferably spaceless and dark. The dramatic characters are seated around a round table facing each other. A single spotlight illuminates the table.

Time: An hour later, following the meeting on Karl-Marx-Allee.

Dialogue: Most of the text represents the inner voice(s) of the protagonist—the artist with a lowercase *a* or the painter—and is meant to be performed live on the main stage, reflecting the interiority of his mind or the stream of his psychic thoughts. Lines marked with *aside* suggest spoken, phonetic interactions between characters or simple utterances in the protagonist's external physical world, differing from the conventional use of this signifier in classical dramatic texts. In classical texts, *aside* typically refers to a character speaking from the periphery of the main action, privately to themselves or directly to the audience, indicating a mental evaluation or inner thoughts. In this text, however, *aside* signifies lines spoken aloud between characters or as a monologue in the social world. The *aside* lines are expected to be played on film and projected as moving images on a screen beside the main stage.

HASSO WEIß EHRENWERTH: ARRIVAL AND THE CONVERGENCE

Screen Scene: Matti and Natis are at the Studio of Natis at Ohlauer Str. 36.

NATIS (Aside)

Here we are! Have you ever been here before?

MATTI (Aside)

No, I just walked past once and saw you inside!

NATIS (Aside)

How do you feel now? Did the Ibu help a bit?

MATTI (Aside)

A little!

NATIS (Aside)

At least!

MATTI (Aside)

What are we doing now? Whose are these two paintings?

NATIS (Aside)

Those two are Hank's!

MATTI (Aside)
(nods)

NATIS (Aside)

What we're going to do is meditate in silence! Breathe, and try to listen to Him!

MATTI (Aside)

Listen to Hasso!?

NATIS (Aside)

Yes, unfortunately!

MATTI (Aside)

Whatever you say! But I'm telling you, if this doesn't make me feel better, I'm never seeing you again, because it'll prove you need to spend some time in a clinic. I'm here because the dream part of this whole thing made me suspicious!

HASAN
Folks! We have only one shot to hit the target!

HANK
Shite!

NATIS
I think we'll be fine! I am confident!

NATIS (Aside)
(smiling)
Let's sit facing each other.

MATTI (Aside)
(sarcastically)
Si!

NATIS (Aside)
Close your eyes, slowly breathe in and out, and try to focus on the depths of your mind, in your spirit.

...

MATTI (Aside)
Nothing!

NATIS (Aside)
Let's give it two more minutes.

...

Still nothing! You?

MATTI (Aside)
(crossing arms)
No, Natis! This is ridiculous!

NATIS (Aside)
Just give me a moment! We have just started! Maybe we should sit back to back.

...

Ok! Again! Close your eyes, and breathe slowly in and out. Try to concentrate on the depths of your mind.

...

(annoyed)

Ugh!

Let me bring the prototype veil from the painting series. I'll play with it. You just keep breathing and meditating. I'll manage the veil myself.

MATTI (Aside)
(rubbing temples)

Affirmative!

NATIS (Aside)
(smiling)

...

HASSO
Hey, losers!

Stage Scene: Hasso enters the stage, holding His own chair in His hands. Forcefully slides it in between Hasan and Hank and sits!

MATTI (Aside)
(fearful)

Oh my God! I hear something!

NATIS (Aside)

Hush!

(relieved)

You can say whatever you like inside you! I believe we'll be able to hear you.

Stage Scene: Matti enters the stage disoriented, curiously looking around until he spots the round table. However, he stands beside everyone else, as there is no other chair available. Matti stares at Hasso, noting their resemblance; they are not identical but similar.

MATTI
(anxious)

No shit! Do you hear me?

NATIS
Yes. Finally! Matti, do you hear me too?

MATTI
Yes!

HASAN | HANK
What about us?

MATTI
What the fuck!?! Are these Hank and Hasan?

NATIS
Yes, Matti! I am glad you have witnessed this now! Am I, or are we, free from your doubts now?

MATTI
(nervously excited)
Fuck me! Yes!

HANK
The pain is easing!

NATIS
How do you feel, Matti?

MATTI
Much better! It's unbelievable!

NATIS
I know!

HASSO
Can we clarify things? I have been waiting for fifty-nine days to communicate with you dummies. Why am I here? What is going on? Why do I feel I am in two miserable bodies at the same time?

NATIS
Ok, folks! This is the level we have to deal with from now on! We will

converge and let Him settle in, and get used to us.
Matti! You too! All of this must be overwhelming.
Hasso, this is all new to us too.
We, Natis and Matti, are—let's say—the captains of these two frames.
And there are two more — two other beings who reside within me,
Hasan and Hank; I mean, I also have You now.
It looks like Matti will share You with me. Matti and I will deal with You
together because it seems like You'll reside in both of our bodies! We've
no idea what the features of this type of shared subjectivity are yet.
I assume Matti and I will feel You, even when we're apart, but we'll only
hear Your voice when the two bodies are near each other! Or maybe not!
I'm not sure how close we need to be. We'll have to try and see.
Of course, how we'll paint is another mystery. We'll need to experiment.

HASSO
I don't understand!

NATIS
Hasso. You have all the answers! We all have the answers. We have to let
them emerge through our dialogues. I know You might not like us,
especially the ones from my side and my body. But there's no way back!
We have to find a way to co-exist and work together!

HASSO
No way back!?! Back to where?

NATIS
We need to find a middle ground.

HASAN
To end the pain! Hasso! Please, walk us through Your narrative. You
must feel uneasy with these two bodies You're in now. Engage with their
pasts, negotiate Your being with their lives, and tell us who You are and
make these two bodies Your own!

HASSO
*I was expecting YOU to tell Me. I do not like these bodies. Especially YOURS.
This is all I know.*

NATIS
(jumps)
What? You just poked me!? Do not do that again!
We don't have to like or love each other, but we have to function together.

There is no other choice.

HASAN

We can give You some clues, but not much more!

HASSO

Go on!

NATIS

You are the *absolute* Artist. You are a deeply believed *Human quality* by the majority of people. You are not physical nor biological, but rather an implanted parasite within every biological person who has the potential as a subject registers in life.

HASSO

Hä?! You sound ridiculous!

NATIS

You exist within every creative person's selfhood! Some feel You more intensely, some faintly. You regulate artists and their artworks and force them to be uniform under several categories. Body types are very relevant in this game. All bodies are there to multiply, divide, sum, and subscribe to their mytho-symbolic values and meanings, always according to You as an abstract and universalised being. It's a collective narrative believed so deeply that makes You the reality for all. But now, You're in these two bodies. So, tell us — who are You for us? We've named You so far, but you must tell us about Your life and the way You are painting.

HASSO

Hmmmm! I am starting to understand!

Then, open up your histories, your past experiences, and your own interpretations of your lives to Me! Both of you — let Me observe it all!

NATIS

Matti, can you do that? Just concentrate on your past! Meditate and recall as many memories as you can, from your childhood to today. Try to remember all the feelings, all the meanings of your life!

MATTI

Okay!

NATIS

I'll do the same!

...

HASSO

That's enough! Now, I know who I meant to be in relation to you both. Listen to Me:

I am Hasso Weiß Ehrenwerth. I was born on 13 January 1988 in West Berlin, to a British mother and an East German father. I developed an interest in painting early on encouraged by My maternal grandfather, who was a student of the Swedish painter Pierre Brassau. My parents were in love when they made Me. My mother worked in East Berlin but lived in the West. She had special permission for these working conditions and crossed the border daily, but was never allowed to stay at night. My parents always dreamed of reunification. I do not remember, Mom told me, they used to talk about their future at the rare, quick, and occasional early dinner tables. When the Berlin Wall finally fell, instead of getting together to fulfil their dreams, My father disappeared. Mom was devastated. She grew bitter and dominant, and the Berlin Wall remained a phantom border for her, as she never walked the streets of East Berlin again. Growing up with a mother prone to violent episodes of anger whenever we neared the Wall was tough. Until puberty, I developed irrational fears about walking in the East too. My mom never got better. Her depression only worsened, which prompted Me to leave home at seventeen. I changed My surname to My father's, severing ties with My mom. She moved back to England. Since her departure, I have felt a sense of liberation and have become less anxious about stepping into East Berlin. However, My left leg limps when I walk in East Berlin — possibly because she once kicked Me so hard when I strayed too close to the border in her mind. I return to painting. The days with My grandfather were the only happy times of My upbringing. I have specialised in following my instincts through bold brush strokes, influenced later by German neo-Expressionism, which has helped Me gain a stronger sense of self and improve as much as possible.

NATIS

That was quick!

HASAN

(thinking deeply and whispering)

Today is January 13th. He was born on January 13, 1988! It is too simple!

HASSO

I've added your lives together, multiplied them by My effect on you both, then divided the result by the sum of the sub- and super-structures — a careful calculation of the things you both comply with and resist with your insecurities!

NATIS (Aside)
(confident)

So, we can start practicing!

MATTI (Aside)
(confused)

I'll need some time alone to let it all sink in.

HASAN
(keep thinking and whispering)

If we replaced the prophets in the dream and my protagonist was born
right in the middle of the prophet's birthdates!
(shocked)

Omg!

NATIS (Aside)

Oh. I didn't mean now!

MATTI (Aside)

I really need to rest !

NATIS (Aside)

I know! Once you have enough time to process everything, let me know.

Screen Scene: Matti stomps out!

HASAN

Matti! Wait! When was your birthday?

NATIS (Aside)
(embarrassed)

Bye! If you need anything, let me know!

HANK

He looks upset!

NATIS

Yes.

HANK

Oh, great! This co-working thing's going to be hard to get used to!

HASAN

Folks! I think I know why we converge with Matti specifically!

NATIS

What? Why?

HASAN

Hasso! Why is your birthday on 13 of January 1988?

HASSO

Because it's the exact middle date between yours and Matti's birthdays.

HASAN

I knew it! Guys, do you remember the last time we went to Matti's birthday?

NATIS

Yes! That's when the body collapsed. We passed out!

HASAN

Right. Matti's birthday cake had a peach emoji on it. I don't remember why, but he was wearing latex gloves. After he blew out the candles, he stuck his finger in the middle of the peach and licked it slowly. We never really talked about why we passed out that day, but it's tied to the history of this body—an early memory of mine. I don't need to verbalise it any further. The feeling, the abstract sense of it, is enough. Right?

NATIS

Wow! So, Hasso became a kind of subjectivation for us, entangled with another body because Matti's actions triggered something deep in us. Somewhere in our brain, we held onto that date and what happened there.

HASSO

Touché!

HASAN

I also think the environment Matti created with his circle of close friends that day was far from the typical reality of Germany!

FIGURING OUT HOW TO PAINT

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Natis
Hasan
Hank
Hasso
Matti

Screen Scene: At the Studio of Natis on Ohlauer Str. 36.

Stage Scene: Minimal decoration. Preferably spaceless and dark. The dramatic characters are seated around a round table facing each other. A single spotlight illuminates the table.

Time: A week later in January, following the convergence and arrival of Hasso into His bodily situatedness in both of Natis's and Matti's frames. Three months into the German unspeakables in the Middle East. There has been a further escalation of ethical collapse and a suspension of all moral values.

Dialogue: Most of the text represents the inner voice(s) of the protagonist—the artist with a lowercase *a* or the painter— and is meant to be performed live on the main stage, reflecting the interiority of his mind or the stream of his psychic thoughts. Lines marked with *aside* suggest spoken, phonetic interactions between characters or simple utterances in the protagonist's external physical world, differing from the conventional use of this signifier in classical dramatic texts. In classical texts, *aside* typically refers to a character speaking from the periphery of the main action, privately to themselves or directly to the audience, indicating a mental evaluation or inner thoughts. In this text, however, *aside* signifies lines spoken aloud between characters or as a monologue in the social world. The *aside* lines are expected to be played on film and projected as moving images on a screen beside the main stage.

HASSO WEIß EHRENWERTH: FIGURING OUT HOW TO PAINT

Screen Scene: At the Studio of Natis on Ohlauer Str. 36. It is a rainy Berlin day. Natis is in front of the canvas, trying to paint while waiting for Matti to come. The door knocks.

NATIS (Aside)

Hey! Thank you so much for coming that quickly. I thought you'd take more time. I hope you're not mad at me!

MATTI (Aside)

I also thought I would need longer to rationalise it. Especially since seeking professional help for something like this would be impossible. But instead, we had long talks with Hasso. It helped. I am not mad at you. I understand that it is not your mistake.

NATIS (Aside)

Glad to hear that! So, when we're apart, we've both been having private conversations with Him, yeah? We've had long dialogues too.

MATTI (Aside)

It smells of coffee! Do you have any?

NATIS (Aside)

Yes! I'll bring you some! I don't have milk or sugar, though!

MATTI (Aside)

Black's fine!

NATIS (Aside)

Sure! Just give me a second!

...

Here!

MATTI (Aside)

Thanks!

NATIS (Aside)

Are you ready?

MATTI (Aside)

Yes!

NATIS (Aside)

Okay! So, let's take a deep breath.

HASSO

Hey! Hey! Yes! You did and do have separate conversations with Me when you're apart. It's like I'm two independent "Me's", but when you're together, I'm one!

NATIS

Make sense!

...

Yeah, I get it!

MATTI (Aside)

But what happens to the private conversations You have with Natis and me separately when we're together?

HASSO

I don't know the details anymore! They vanish! But I have a general sense of them all. I can't recite them word for word.

MATTI

At least we have some privacy!

NATIS

Will You cooperate with us today to paint?

HASSO

Of course! I can't wait to paint!

NATIS

Nice! I've prepared several canvases already.

MATTI

Okay! But haven't you tried painting before? I mean, we've got two private versions of Him when we're apart! You must've experimented with Him, right?

HASSO

Not so private! Remember, I've got an abstract sense of everything.

NATIS (Aside)

Okay, Hasso! We got it!

NATIS

Yeah, we did, Matti! But we didn't get very far with the free brushstrokes that were supposed to flow from the body through the shoulder, onto the brush, and onto the canvas.

MATTI (Aside)

Why not?

NATIS (Aside)

I think He talks to each of us separately just fine, but He's not as strong when guiding our physical movements when we're apart. I'm not sure, though. It could be for other reasons. Whether it's me or Him, I don't know, but the body gets tense and nervous.

MATTI (Aside)

Tell me more! There wasn't any moment you could paint with Him?

NATIS (Aside)

We start painting just fine, but then the body begins glitching! Like twitches! We made some strokes, and at first, it was going well. But then suddenly, these small, involuntary spasms made us lose control of the *body-arm-brush* accordance. Finally, the right forearm, upper arm, and the right side of the torso locked up, and I couldn't move for about five minutes!

MATTI (Aside)

Ooh! Hmm. Let's try now together!

NATIS (Aside)

You can give it a go with YOUR body, too!

MATTI (Aside)

I've no idea how to paint! Never done it before!

NATIS (Aside)

I wouldn't be surprised if you suddenly started painting — and doing it well!

MATTI (Aside)

Okay! You start now, and let's see where it goes!

NATIS (Aside)

Alright!

...

MATTI (Aside)

Girl! Look at that! It's smooth, isn't it?

NATIS (Aside)

Oh, fuck yes! We're doing it! It is much better when you are here with us!

MATTI (Aside)

Look at you!

(surprised)

What is it that you are painting?

NATIS (Aside)

(worried)

HASAN

He is a maniac!

HANK

I can't believe this!

NATIS

Hey! It is not your day. I thought we had agreed on this. You were supposed to be quiet and stay in the back today.

HASAN | HANK

(disappointed)

Tamam!

Right!

HASSO

It is what WE are painting! I am who I am in THESE bodies! What I want to express must have been a hidden drive you both had had for some time somewhere in you. Whether it is empathetic or sadistic is open to interpretation.

MATTI (Aside)

(worried)

So, are we both involved in these depictions?

I guess!? No idea...
Wanna try too?

NATIS (Aside)
(concerned)

Not sure about that!

MATTI (Aside)

I know! But maybe it is an unconscious thing as He says! It would feel good!?

NATIS (Aside)

Okay!

MATTI (Aside)

...

But this does not feel right!

Just focus on the strokes, not on the images!
You've got such a professional posture and brushstrokes already!

NATIS (Aside)

...

How is it?

Yeah. I like it!

MATTI (Aside)
(confused)

...

We'll make a good team! How often can you be here with us?

NATIS (Aside)
(excited)

...

MATTI (Aside)
(silence)

(suddenly)

Ok, we must talk!

HASSO
(worried)
He is not on board!
MATTI (Aside)

Natis, you can't expect me to drop everything and come to your studio anytime on your command for painting! It's fascinating that I've got this muscle memory out of nowhere, but I'm not sure this is my path!
I do not think this would be my life!

NATIS (Aside)
Not on my command! Of course not! But it's not just *you* anymore! If we want to keep feeling well, we must keep practicing.

HASSO
(sarcastically sad)
Ohhh! Are you going to cry?

MATTI (Aside)
I've got my own life! It's too much to expect!

NATIS (Aside)
Of course! But I am sure His energies will accumulate and lead to our bodily discomfort if you do not come. They must be released on the canvas in regular base.

MATTI (Aside)
I understand! However, you have to be okay with me coming when I am available. Let us keep it for the times when I MUST come. I can not always fit into your plans.

NATIS (Aside)
Okay sure! I did not even insinuate anything like that. Of course, I can not expect you to fit into MY plans!

MATTI (Aside)
I know, but I must say it now, so there are no false expectations. Sorry!

NATIS (Aside)
No! It is fine! I understand. Totally!

MATTI (Aside)

I mean, it is exciting! And it's definitely more fun than scary now! I can see myself enjoying being part of your projects. But not so often!

NATIS (Aside)

Maybe I'll find a way to paint without you along the way! And when you feel like coming to the studio, you're always welcome. Just know I'll be happy and ready anytime you are. In the meantime, I'll try figuring out how to pass these the long contractions. The twitches aren't that bad.

MATTI (Aside)

I am sure you will figure it out.

NATIS (Aside)

The only thing I'd want you to do, at the very least, is represent Hasso. Would that be something for you?

MATTI (Aside)

What do you mean?

NATIS (Aside)

Could you just be the Artist for the public? Can you own Him just for the publicity? I'll paint and take care of all the official responsibilities! I only want you to be the face of Hasso!

HASSO

Yes! This is such a good idea! Please, Matti!
(unapologetically with contempt)
Don't let Natis be "Me!" Look at him!

MATTI

Oh, stop!

MATTI (Aside)

But He's with you too!

HASSO

Please! Please! Pleaseeeee!

NATIS (Aside)

Yes! But, He enjoys your company more. All you'd have to do is to attend the openings a couple of times a year! Take some photos for His socials

and, if any comes along, the interviews.

HASSO
Yes! There's not much to do!

MATTI (Aside)
(standing taller)
Okay! I suppose I'd enjoy this type of involvement more than painting.
And it's fun to show off!

HASSO
Yassss!

NATIS (Aside)
What a relief! I'm glad you're on board with this!

...

Screen Scene: A little while later, when Matti was still painting.

NATIS (Aside)
However! Is it alright if we draw up a contract to protect our rights?

MATTI (Aside)
A contract!?
(smiling)
This sounds like we're getting divorced before even getting married and
figuring out custody arrangements for our kid, Hasso.
Yes, of course!

NATIS (Aside)
(laughing out loud)
Yes!

PAINTING BEHAVIOUR
MODIFICATION TOOL

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Natis
Hasan
Hank
Hasso
Sadak

Screen Scene: Wienerstr. ■, 3. OG, through the balcony last door.

Stage Scene: Minimal decoration. Preferably spaceless and dark. The dramatic characters are seated around a round table facing each other. A single spotlight illuminates the table.

Time: Couple days after Matti's second visit to Natis's studio.

Dialogue: Most of the text represents the inner voice(s) of the protagonist—the artist with a lowercase *a* or the painter— and is meant to be performed live on the main stage, reflecting the interiority of his mind or the stream of his psychic thoughts. Lines marked with *aside* suggest spoken, phonetic interactions between characters or simple utterances in the protagonist's external physical world, differing from the conventional use of this signifier in classical dramatic texts. In classical texts, *aside* typically refers to a character speaking from the periphery of the main action, privately to themselves or directly to the audience, indicating a mental evaluation or inner thoughts. In this text, however, *aside* signifies lines spoken aloud between characters or as a monologue in the social world. The *aside* lines are expected to be played on film and projected as moving images on a screen beside the main stage.

HASSO WEIß EHRENWERTH: THE PAINTING BEHAVIOUR
MODIFICATION TOOL

*Screen Scene: It is a cloudy afternoon at the Sadak's flat on the corner apartment
where one can see Görlitzer Park from his windows.*

NATIS (Aside)

Okay, Sadakčić! Imagine as if I've got a motor dysfunction — involuntary movements in my right arm. These twitches just take over whenever I try to paint. But it's weird because it only happens when I paint in a certain way, in a certain style. And the worst part isn't even the twitching. Those jerks or jitters — what they medically call T-reflexes — make my tendons eventually pull tight, locking my muscles up and making my arm go rigid for a good five minutes before it finally lets my muscles go.

SADAK (Aside)

Something like hypertonia!? But you don't have that, do you? Or is this something new?

NATIS (Aside)

Yes! No! Not really... It's puzzling. Just take it as one of my arty-farty things. Let's call it a thought experiment.

SADAK (Aside)
(cheerfully smiling)

A new *Natis* thing!

NATIS (Aside)

Exactly! So, I need to develop a device — a painting tool — to prevent the rigidity. Not the jitters, they're too sudden and sharp. There's not much we can do about those. But the pulls — I want to stop this hypertonia. Whenever the frequency of the twitches or jerks increases to a certain point, they result in a constant pull that locks up my right forearm, upper arm, and the right side of my torso. It only happens when my forearm and upper arm form an angle less than sixty degrees at the elbow.

I seek to design an orthotic device to keep my arm from bending less than sixty degrees.

HASSO

Is this all for Me to paint without your miserable body getting in the way? I'm flattered!

HANK

Will you stop being a jerk?

HASSO
(laughing)

Tell this to the jerking arm!

HANK

Stop turning tables. You are the one causing this problem!

NATIS

It's alright, Hank. Leave him be. Maybe I am the issue!

SADAK (Aside)

Hmm! Are you sure there isn't already something in medical tech for this? Or maybe a medicine?

NATIS (Aside)

Maybe! I've looked into medical devices just to get an idea, but since it only happens when I paint in a certain style, I want to approach it artistically! As you design for theatres and dancers and make those amazing costumes, I thought you could help me!

SADAK (Aside)

I see. It sounds interesting and fun, but it'll be tricky and difficult to build. Do you have any specific ideas in mind?

NATIS (Aside)

I do! But I'm not sure how to put them together.

SADAK (Aside)

I'm all ears!

NATIS (Aside)

I imagine the tool limiting my arm's movement with a stick — a martial arts fighting stick.

HASAN

Oh! Nice idea. We can even make an extra one for Him to help with His limping leg!

NATIS
(excited)

Yes!

HANK

UuuUu!

SADAK (Aside)

Why a martial arts stick?

NATIS (Aside)

It's symbolic. It reflects the ambivalence of my conflicting desires and ideals. By invoking *discipline*, I remind myself that I'm both the master and the servant of my passions — the forces that stem from things beyond me and out of my conscious agencies.

HANK

Is that so?

NATIS

I'm simplifying for him to understand. I don't have time to explain our complicated situation right now.

SADAK (Aside)

I'm sure you have your reasons. Do you know where to buy these sticks?

NATIS (Aside)

The sticks, yes! They'll be custom-made. I'll handle that part.

SADAK (Aside)

Good. How will the stick fit or be attached to this device?

NATIS (Aside)

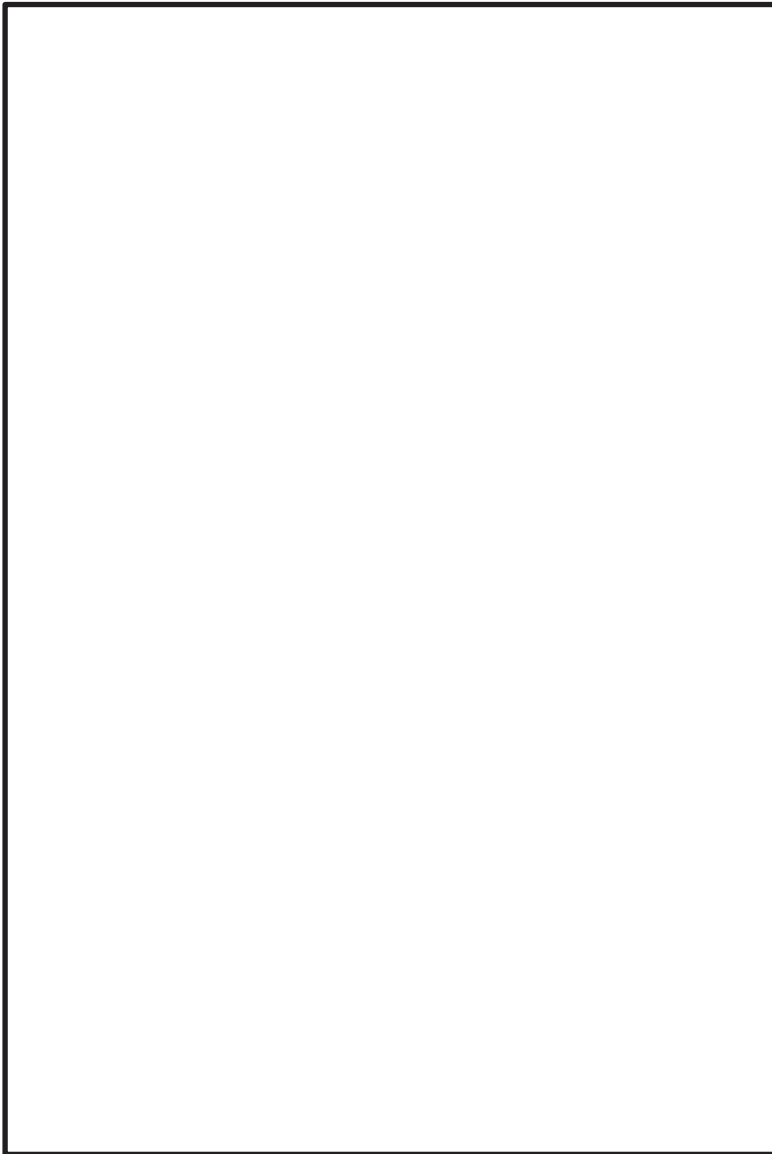
We'll attach one end of the stick to my wrist and the other to the back of my neck. You see?

SADAK (Aside)

Hmm no!

NATIS (Aside)

Okay! Picture the cane attached to my wrist on one side and leaning on my shoulder on the other. It has a small rope on the shoulder side that is also connected to a hoop, then the hoop to the back of my neck. The rope



is adjusted so that when my muscles pull my arm, the stick will stop my forearm and upper arm from forming an angle smaller than sixty degrees. That way, the spasms can not get worse leading towards the hypertonia.

HASSO
(demonically smiling)

SADAK (Aside)

I think I get it!

NATIS (Aside)
That's why we need to make something like a glove to fix the fighting stick in place, on these organs.

SADAK (Aside)
Right. But since you want it attached to your neck, we'll need to combine the glove and neck pieces with a vest to make it all one unit.

NATIS (Aside)
Okay, but can it be short? I don't want it to look like a jacket.

SADAK (Aside)
It'll probably look like a cropped-top jacket.

NATIS (Aside)
That sounds better!

SADAK (Aside)
Would leather work for you?

HANK
No! Use synthetic leather. At least this won't be as cruel!

HASAN
Hank!!!

NATIS (Aside)
Can it be vegan?

SADAK (Aside)
They behave differently — synthetic and real leathers. You're not vegan, are you?

NATIS (Aside)
(smiling)

No, I am not!

SADAK (Aside)
(smiling)

So?

NATIS (Aside)

You are right!

HANK

You are terrible!

NATIS (Aside)

Okay, what else do we need?

SADAK (Aside)

Besides leather, we will need viscose fabric for the lining, zippers, threads, a small rope, and some steel pieces for the attachments. Once you get the sticks, come and show me. I will text you the list of materials and where to buy them. You choose the colours, and we'll refine the design together step by step during several prototyping sessions.

THE GHOST AND THE GEIST

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Natis
Hasan
Hank
Hasso
İz

Screen Scene: At the little garden of Cerebra Coffee on Ritterstraße.

Stage Scene: Minimal decoration. Preferably spaceless and dark. The dramatic characters are seated around a round table facing each other. A single spotlight illuminates the table.

Time: A week before the Ceremony.

Dialogue: Most of the text represents the inner voice(s) of the protagonist—the artist with a lowercase *a* or the painter— and is meant to be performed live on the main stage, reflecting the interiority of his mind or the stream of his psychic thoughts. Lines marked with *aside* suggest spoken, phonetic interactions between characters or simple utterances in the protagonist's external physical world, differing from the conventional use of this signifier in classical dramatic texts. In classical texts, *aside* typically refers to a character speaking from the periphery of the main action, privately to themselves or directly to the audience, indicating a mental evaluation or inner thoughts. In this text, however, *aside* signifies lines spoken aloud between characters or as a monologue in the social world. The *aside* lines are expected to be played on film and projected as moving images on a screen beside the main stage.

HASSO WEIß EHRENWERTH: THE GHOST AND THE GEIST

Screen Scene: It is a sunny and unexpectedly hot Berlin day at the little garden of Cerebra Coffee on Ritterstraße.

NATIS (Aside)

How do you know whether it's a ghost or a spirit?

İZ (Aside)

When a ghost appears or makes its presence known, it imposes itself—there's nothing you can do to resist! You can't communicate! It haunts you and overwhelms you. You become frustrated. It makes you desperate for a way out to overcome the feelings it stirs in you.

A spirit, on the other hand, is when a ghost becomes familiar. You can talk to it.

Communication and cooperation become possible.

In short, a spirit is a channeled ghost. Once you find a way to connect to a ghost's energy, it becomes a spirit.

NATIS (Aside)

Is that what happened with Zişan?

İZ (Aside)

Yes.

NATIS (Aside)

How were you able to channel her?

İZ (Aside)

I had no idea what to do with her at first. It was a process. I had to dive into the history of mediumship, especially the kind that developed around World War I.

Then I discovered what I needed to do while I was asleep! *The Portal* (2010) revealed itself to me in a dream. It's the instrument, the tool I use to talk to her.

Not only did I see *the Portal*, but I also knew who had to make it. That morning, I woke up and walked from home to his workshop as if I'd done it a thousand times. I found him in the *Çemberlitaş* at the coppersmiths market, a district of historic Istanbul.

NATIS (Aside)

So! Is *the Portal* what allows you to channel her?

İZ (Aside)

Yes! How is it for you?

NATIS (Aside)

For me, it is my body that is channelled by them. It's a battle — not with Hank or Hasan. They are more peaceful. I'm happy to let them use my body. Sometimes, Hasan can be difficult, but I can not use the word possessed. Though accepting their presence was tough and painful at first, once I embraced them, everything became smoother.

With Hasso, it's different. *He* is hard to manage. *He* triggers me a lot, and I feel tense. I mean, I could stop Him channeling my body anytime, of course. It turns into something like being possessed only because I want to paint with Him. And for painting, I have to let Him be more influential. I let Him take charge. So, when I do that, from the intensity of those emotions He invokes, my body stiffens, and I get muscle spasms or twitches — particularly in my painting arm.

İZ (Aside)

Is that why you made that painting tool?

NATIS (Aside)

The *Painting Behaviour Modification Tool*. Yes! It helps with the contractions but not much with the twitches. But the real help is not the tool. It is Matti.

Only when Matti —the other person who Hasso lives with simultaneously— is present, do I feel at peace.

By the way, I also had a guiding dream! I knew Hasso was nearby, but he had not fully arrived. I dreamed of a story by Hasan. Along with the visions, Matti's face appeared to me.

(smiling)

Matti's presence makes Hasso's channeling more peaceful. My *Portal* is Matti. When Matti can not be around, the tool helps me regulate my psychosomatic difficulties.

But I must say, once I stop Hasso after letting Him use my body intensely, I feel as though I've run ten kilometres and am riding the aftereffects of a rush of endorphins and serotonin-dopamine.

They aren't ghosts or spirits, though the word *spirit* confuses me a lot! I call them passions!

İZ (Aside)

Why does the word *spirit* confuse you?

NATIS (Aside)

Because I cannot track the differences between the notions of *psychic* and *spiritual* in literature. Both have similar etymological meanings — *breath* and *life*! In religious, philosophical, medical, and psychoanalytic texts, words like *mind*, *soul*, *spirit*, *Geist*, *brain*, *psyche*, *self*, *ego*, *conscious*, and *consciousness* are all entangled in a very confusing way. Every thinker has their own glossary and personal meanings.

As someone with no metaphysical belief system, I have a very atheistic understanding of metaphysics — the words *spirit* and *spirituality* resonate with me more as vitality, willpower, and a deep sense of connection with others, awe, wonder, or personal transformation. Only in this sense do I see Hasan and Hank as spirits, and Hasso as — well, a little Hegelian—a form of *Geist*!

Trans-subjective energies or... *Passions*!

İZ (Aside)

Are they real for you?

NATIS (Aside)

Real? No! They are part of my *reality*!

İZ (Aside)

I see you're more on the positivistic, rationalistic side of things. You have no problem following the footsteps —or maybe even losing yourself in the definitions and explanations— of those *big Men* in literature. That's not my path! I'm okay with being confused.

I reject it all—positivism, rationalism, and metaphysics too.

One might say my relationship with Zişan is metaphysical, but I wouldn't define it based on the metaphysics of those *big Men*.

NATIS (Aside)

Well! I'd say I'm more in favour of a *second Enlightenment*! The first one was a necessary step, but it wasn't enough. And now, we are troubled by it. Troubled deeply! After the first Enlightenment, the Human world remained under the reign of the same *Man*, who had been empowered by the Abrahamic God! After the death of God, the metaphysical residues of that *Man* shape-shifted, but remained intact!

İZ (Aside)

Where do you see the residues of that *Man*?

NATIS (Aside)

I mean, I don't have *the* formal training to read properly those *big Boys*,

you know me! But I see that many who did still misread the literature. I only know it from some others with that formal education. It was fruitful to misread in some cases.
If it's fine for them to misread, why not for me?
I love to speculate.
So, where do I see the traces of *Them* today?
In the contemporary use of the notions of the *Human* and the *Artist*!

İZ (Aside)

Aren't they the same?

NATIS (Aside)
(smiling)

Yes and no!
They are twin brothers!

İZ (Aside)
(tittering softly)

CEREMONY

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Natis
Hasan
Hank
Hasso
Matti
Willem

Screen Scene: At the Studio of Natis on Ohlauer Str. 36.

Stage Scene: Minimal decoration. Preferably spaceless and dark. The dramatic characters are seated around a round table facing each other. A single spotlight illuminates the table.

Time: Five days after the Berlin Art Week.

Dialogue: Most of the text represents the inner voice(s) of the protagonist—the artist with a lowercase *a* or the painter— and is meant to be performed live on the main stage, reflecting the interiority of his mind or the stream of his psychic thoughts. Lines marked with *aside* suggest spoken, phonetic interactions between characters or simple utterances in the protagonist's external physical world, differing from the conventional use of this signifier in classical dramatic texts. In classical texts, *aside* typically refers to a character speaking from the periphery of the main action, privately to themselves or directly to the audience, indicating a mental evaluation or inner thoughts. In this text, however, *aside* signifies lines spoken aloud between characters or as a monologue in the social world. The *aside* lines are expected to be played on film and projected as moving images on a screen beside the main stage.

HASSO WEIß EHRENWERTH: CEREMONY

Screen Scene: It is a rather small and specific group of people related to Natis and Matti. Everyone is at Natis's Studio.

NATIS (Aside)

First, thanks to everyone who is with us here today. And Matti, thank you so much for accepting to work with me. Although it seemed like you had no choice, it is astonishing you agreed to be the face of this passion, Hasso Weiß Ehrenwerth. From today on, Matti will be the representative of the works I, or we, will produce under the name of Hasso, through which Matti will help to take as much from my shoulders as an artist subject. And again, Matti! Thank you for letting yourself be evoked by this spiritual journey!

HASSO

Is it Matti or Me who is helping you? Think twice!

MATTI

Of course, You couldn't hold Yourself at the backstage!

HASSO

*Why would I? All this is happening because of Me!
You're just a vessel, an instrument...
No no! I have a better one: You are just a brush for Me!*

MATTI

Wow!!!

NATIS

Do not forget that no one sees You. You are an irrelevant entity for any of these people! You need Matti and me, to be able to express Yourself. So, shut Your gob and let things flow smoothly!

HASSO

Just because you have some documents that legally identify you, doesn't mea...

NATIS
(daringly)

No!
No!

MATTI (Aside)

Thank you, Natis, for making me realise there is more than the narratives we have conditioned to believe about ourselves. And also for sharing your creative world with me.

NATIS (Aside)

Dear guests! Today, we have gathered because we believe, despite our differences, we are being forced—and at times taken over—by a similar, mutual, socially implanted drive in our souls — and we call it Hasso Weiß Ehrenwerth. We have come to an agreement that we can no longer exist independently from one another. Nevertheless, since we are already bureaucratically and legally regulated as alleged independent individuals by the superstructures we live under, we came up with an idea to create a so-called Collaboration Agreement to protect our rights as spiritually entangled beings who exist and function as individuals under the government we happen to live in.

Therefore, I created a Collaboration Agreement to symbolise and represent what it means for Matti and me to be artistically and spiritually or psychically entangled in a state apparatus like the Federal Republic of Germany, which is incapable of grasping not only ours but all sorts of material and spiritual realities of interconnectedness.

Today, we especially invited Willem de Rooij to join us, to witness, and—most importantly—to lead us through this ritualistic ceremony as he made an invaluable contribution with his incredible critique of my—or our— work! Willem, please join us at the table, guide us through, and translate our artistic and spiritual bonding into legally binding terms.

WILLEM (Aside)

Dear friends, peers, and family! We are here to witness and celebrate a unification, the legalisation of an already interconnected two bodies through a Collaboration Agreement!:

Are we not all born with a veil?

However, some have it light, and some heavy.

For certain ones, is it not choking, while for others, does it not help them breathe even better?

The heavier and more throttling these veils get, the greater the gift it might yield.

When lucky, one would discover it.

This secret offering is believed to come as a second sight in this world,

A world that bestows no easy self-consciousness or self-esteem on those with thicker veils,

But only lets them understand themselves through the reality of that world.

“It is a peculiar sensation to have this double-consciousness,” said Du Bois,

*The sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of that certain other—
An ideal that is, for no one, possible;
“Measuring one’s soul by the tape that looks on in amused contempt and pity.”
Nothing has changed since,
Perhaps even further worsened.
Let us then try something a little different in this further maddening world:
“If one ever feels their two-ness — two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled
strivings,”
As he said,
Two warring imaginary ideals in one heavily veiled body:
Maybe one should not let their dogged strength keep it from being torn asunder.
Not anymore!?
Maybe one should let it tear not only in two — but even more.
Let us use our relentless strength not to resist any longer,
But to further root and blossom within every plucked piece.
If monolithic is not the way to be,
Then fragmented will be our bodily situatedness in this world that is damn
Human,
For every bit of our souls holds a universe within.*

HASAN

Mmmm! Nice!

WILLEM (Aside)

Do you, Natis, take Matti to be your lawful wedded collaborator in Arts,
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for you, in sickness and health,
as long as you can handle the stresses of your artistic life?

HASSO
(smiling)
Nö!

NATIS (Aside)

With the passions generated by Hasso Weiß Ehrenwerth, I,
Natis,
take you, Matti,
to be my lawful wedded collaborator in Arts.
I promise that I will respect, honour, and cherish you for all the days we
will artistically collaborate!

WILLEM (Aside)

Matti! Do you take Natis to be your lawful wedded collaborator in Arts,

to have and to hold from this day forward,
for you, not in sickness but in health,
as long as you can handle the stresses of an artistic life?

MATTI (Aside)

With the passions generated by Hasso Weiß Ehrenwerth, I,
Matti,
take you, Natis,
to be my lawful wedded collaborator in Arts.
I promise that I will respect, honour, and cherish you via this Agreement
for all the days we will artistically collaborate!

NATIS (Aside)

I have many veils with various folds and curves —that are invisible. By
lifting this one out of my head and face,
and by covering yours with the alignment of its bloody square, I thee
wed.

MATTI (Aside)

By accepting your veil over mine, by letting you cover my head and face
with the alignment of its bloody square, I wed thee.

WILLEM (Aside)

You may sign the contract!

...

By the name of Arts, I pronounce you artistically wedded as
collaborators.

Screen Scene: Guests applause!

HASAN | HANK
(sarcastically)
Congratulations!

NATIS (Aside) | MATTI (Aside) | HASSO
Thank you!!!
Danke!
Let the real journey begin!

Natis and Matti

are pleased to invite you to their

Ceremony

which will be a translation of their artistic and spiritual
bonding into legally binding terms
by signing, framing, and exhibiting a collaboration
agreement with the ministerial guidance of

WILLEM DE ROOIJ

The Ceremony is an integral part of the BPA//
Exhibition 2024, Half-Light, at KW Institute for
Contemporary Art, Auguststraße 69, 10117, on 15th
November 2024 from 19:00.

FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 20
2024

BETWEEN
19:00-21:00

OHLAUER STR.
36, 10999

FITTING OUT

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Natis
Hasan
Hank
Hasso
Stemmi

Screen Scene: Lübbener Str. ■, Vorderhaus, 4. OG, Right.

Stage Scene: Minimal decoration. Preferably spaceless and dark. The dramatic characters are seated around a round table facing each other. A single spotlight illuminates the table.

Time: Two weeks after the Ceremony.

Dialogue: Most of the text represents the inner voice(s) of the protagonist—the artist with a lowercase *a* or the painter— and is meant to be performed live on the main stage, reflecting the interiority of his mind or the stream of his psychic thoughts. Lines marked with *aside* suggest spoken, phonetic interactions between characters or simple utterances in the protagonist's external physical world, differing from the conventional use of this signifier in classical dramatic texts. In classical texts, *aside* typically refers to a character speaking from the periphery of the main action, privately to themselves or directly to the audience, indicating a mental evaluation or inner thoughts. In this text, however, *aside* signifies lines spoken aloud between characters or as a monologue in the social world. The *aside* lines are expected to be played on film and projected as moving images on a screen beside the main stage.

HASSO WEIß EHRENWERTH: FITTING OUT

Screen Scene: In the morning, at Stemmi's in the same building where Natis lives.

Ask him! HASSO

Wait! NATIS
(annoyed)

Ask him! HASSO

NATIS | HASAN | HANK
Meine Güte!
La havla va la kuvvatte!!!!
Oh, Cosmos!!

HASSO
(frustrated)
How much longer!? They have been talking for more than an hour! I want to know if this will work! We came here for a purpose, didn't we?

HASAN
U, Banagia! Basmaz. Will You shut up already?

STEMMI (Aside)
...you know! And as usual, she just talked about herself the whole time and paid so little to no attention whatsoever to what I've been saying...

NATIS
Hasso! Never a cart before the horse! There are social manners! Please cut it! And let me be!

HASSO
I want to look sexy, up-to-date, and fashionable on the opening day when I will be at Matti's.

NATIS (Aside)
Babe! You tell this every time you meet her as an unpleasant experience, but you keep meeting her! There must be something about her that

draws you to her.

STEMMI (Aside)
(unpleasantly)

Yeah! I do like her!

NATIS (Aside)
(smiling)

That is the charm of those with NPDs. Everyone suffers because of them and yet loves them!

STEMMI (Aside)
I guess it is a human condition.

HASSO
(briskly)

Now!
Now!
It is the best time to change the topic!

NATIS (Aside)
Stemmi! Would you be up for working with me on a little project?

STEMMI (Aside)
What kind of a project?

NATIS (Aside)
I was hoping you could style my new upcoming artist persona!

STEMMI (Aside)
One more?

NATIS (Aside)
The last one!

STEMMI (Aside)
(smiling with elevated eyebrows)
Are you sure?

HANK
Are we sure?

It feels like it! NATIS (Aside)

Tell me about her, them, him! STEMMI (Aside)

Him! It is definitely a He! NATIS (Aside)
(smiling)

Aha! STEMMI (Aside)

Very Grandiose! Very much with NPD, too! Just like the way you love! NATIS (Aside)
(meaningfully smiling)

... HASSO
(annoyed)

Half German, half British... NATIS (Aside)

Will you do whiteface or what? STEMMI (Aside)
(laughing)

Oh, Gott! No! No no! I am collaborating with someone! A friend of mine! Matti! NATIS (Aside)
He will personify Him for me.

Personify!? HASSO
Are you sure?

Hush-hush! NATIS

Do I know him? STEMMI (Aside)

NATIS (Aside)
Wait, I'll show him from his profile.

...

Here!

STEMMI (Aside)
Looks familiar! But, no! I don't know him!
So, you want me to dress him up?

NATIS (Aside)
Yes! And no!

STEMMI (Aside)
Hä!?

NATIS (Aside)
You will style Matti, sure! But in that body, there will be *Another!*

HASSO
(demonically smiles)
Me!

NATIS (Aside)
And that One is an expressive and intuitive Painter! Neo-expressionist,
to be more precise!
Sadistic!
He is politically susceptible but does really like to turn things upside-
down.
Ruthless with a tiny touch of empathy! You know, the kind of empathy
people perform as a duty!

HASSO
Am I?

NATIS
You know, you will paint the paintings form-wise in your way, but you
will still use my body to do it! I will do everything I can to add some
empathy to those paintings.

HASAN
I will force some political correctness.

NATIS
(proudly)

Sure, you will! You are *the* Hasan.

HASSO
(demonically smilies)

Let's see that! You want me to paint but won't let me take full control? I will twitch your arm even more.

NATIS
Is this your confession? That is why I made that *tool*! To have at least some control.

STEMMI (Aside)

Natis? Hey!

NATIS (Aside)

Oh sorry!

STEMMI (Aside)

You were saying!?

NATIS (Aside)

What I was saying? Ämm!

STEMMI (Aside)

Sadistic, but also a tiny bit empathetic!?

NATIS (Aside)

Yes!

Attention seeker!

That is why He wants the most up-to-date look that the most up-to-date contemporary Artists prefer in Berlin: A bit of the late 90s and beginning of the 2000s, wet hair, spiky typographies and jewellery; a bit out now, but — also some of those bleached pieces.
Layers of layers on top of each other...

HASSO
(smiling gladly)

NATIS (Aside)

...Y2K mixed with Dunlop. A little bit sporty, but from a bit motor-sports side! It is an obsession nowadays!

STEMMI (Aside)

Yes, yes! I understand. Berlin has a distinctive style in this.

NATIS (Aside)

Sprinkles of *fetish and* sexual revolutionary mood.

HASSO

(excited)

Yes, gimme that mood, gimme that wardrobe!

NATIS

Sure, and calm down! I don't want you to look like what every second-year resident of Kreuzkölln turns into!

NATIS (Aside)

Not so much. It should be a slight parody but leaning more toward pastiche.

STEMMI (Aside)

What does pastiche mean?

NATIS (Aside)

You know pastiche means imitation without parody—an imitation that takes its supposed original seriously! I don't want it to look totally cheap. I want to treat it earnestly while proving that it is merely an etiquette that anyone can obtain!

(shady)

Like how I do my paintings as well!

HASSO

(little upset)

HASAN

Hank! He is roasting us again, did you hear that?

STEMMI (Aside)

So! He should look more like Richert Beil, Ottolinger, and a little less Namilia, but that too, of course, maybe a bit also towards SF1OG and, or Sia Arnika!

NATIS (Aside)

I do not know what you are talking about. I trust you!

STEMMI (Aside)

Let me show you!
I think I got you! You talk about how mostly the dance scene kids dress in Berlin! They all look alike and dress the way you described!

NATIS (Aside)

Oh yes!

STEMMI (Aside)

Look!
These are the brands I mentioned!
Ottolinger, for example! They became famous with this strappy Y2K style, but they've developed it even further. In the beginning, they burned the edges of their clothes, and then the holes came, and those asymmetrical draping...
Everything is pretty body-tight and looks trendy, sporty vibe, a bit like Diesel.
They're from Berlin and have their studio in Neukölln.

NATIS (Aside)

Mmmm!
Yes!

STEMMI (Aside)

And look! SF1OG...
This could be something, but it is a bit ämm, halfway there... It may be too casual for what you want!

NATIS (Aside)

Si!

STEMMI (Aside)

And, Richert Beil...!
They have like this ämm, Berlin latexyyyy, denimyyyy vibes, so... I like them aesthetically. Their last show looked very good! I saw the show! They created a look that was very 2010s, very skinny jeans... yes the skinny jeans are already coming back! Very low waist, croppy tops, etc. It could be something! It is less sporty, but fetishy and hot!

...

I saw the runway of Sia Arnika in Paris. I like it in terms of what you want as a look! You know, very contemporary, trendy, a little less Y2K,

but it's there, sporty, clubby...

NATIS (Aside)

Claro!

STEMMI (Aside)

I understand what you want. Neo-club dress code!

(laughing)

I've just made up this word. Typical Berlin club look, signalling a bit of Gothic and Punk styles—it is all a mishmash of stolen elements from existing subcultures and made into one look for Berlin!

NATIS (Aside)

Spot on!

STEMMI (Aside)

Anyways! Why are you obsessed with this look?

NATIS (Aside)

Are you sure, you want to listen to this?

STEMMI (Aside)

(nods and smiles)

NATIS (Aside)

Well! It seems to be that these days, people in the Arts feel obliged to signal they're part of this tribe through this *mishmash dress code* you've just described.

And don't get me started on how having pronounced cheekbones and a chiselled, fatless jawline have become more important than your contribution to the culture.

Moreover, Art professionals across many institutions of that age range of late millennials started to have a bit of an age-wise existential crisis in their lives where they developed a fetishistic obsession for the coming generation right behind them. They wish to speak like them, act like them, dress like them, and so on. Think about it, these are the gatekeepers today. Very terrifying.

STEMMI (Aside)

Are you exaggerating a bit?

NATIS (Aside)

Of course, I do! It is fun!

However, just look at the Instagram photos of a few artists of your choice! You'll see how they all try to catch the right angle to show off their facial features: half-open lips with a subtle, seductive expression, desperate to project that *model* look.

The attention span is so low today that it turns everything in the Arts into a mere quest for the perfect social media post! People make art now *for* social media!

STEMMI (Aside)
(smiling)

Okay! I know, I mean.. that is my job!

NATIS (Aside)

Exactly! Your job is fashion — fashion is not my problem.

But that industry becoming inseparable from art-making is another level.

The Arts used to influence fashion; now, fashion dictates the Arts.

STEMMI (Aside)

What's wrong with that?

NATIS (Aside)

I want to make it a little disturbingly obvious and awkward! That's all!

STEMMI (Aside)

But why?

NATIS (Aside)

Because *it is* awkward! Every artist today wants to be a fashion model simultaneously.

This phenomenon, in itself, isn't an issue.

The issue is that the discourse and focus of the Arts shift towards a hyper-normalised and culturally-induced hyper-narcissism.

Wanting to enjoy rewarding practices is understandable — it motivates us to keep going.

But this? This is leading to a pandemic-level unhealthy relationship not only for artists but for anyone who is involved in this cultural industry with themselves!

Look, I've got my own fears and anxieties about my appearance and aging, etc.! I'm not exempt from any of this.

But, I don't want to express myself from within these and live out my insecurities by pastiching the pastiche. That's not the solution to these problems we all have.

STEMMI (Aside)

Yes! But you like these things too.

NATIS (Aside)

Of course! I am not a monk! But there is a limit to everything —an ethical limit. It is needed for solid self-esteem and for respecting others. A border where scavenging on other people's insecurities should be checked and called out. We are developing more pronounced divisions and biases based on conventional beauty and tastefulness.

It's there, it's obvious, but no one talks about it! No one wants to talk about it. It is easy to criticise racism, sexism, etc. but, once it is about beauty standards and class taste or fashion, everyone goes mute.

The current generation is grappling with a unique paradox: although more educated than ever, all of those under forty, starting with the millennials, face diminishing job opportunities, leaving them in a state of inner struggle. This economic climate, where material comforts have faded since the 1970s, has given rise to emotional and cultural trends focused on self-image, fashion, and celebrity. Repressed rage and self-loathing have been channeled into exaggerated notions of self-worth, often also masked by woke religiosity and a culture of self-betterment. However, the tools used to seek reassurance—therapies, treatments, planets, ancient diets, healing, and PC language — are not the solution but the product of the problem. These have given birth to a culture that is hyper-narcissistic, with the boost of social media, where both personal appearance and victimhood narratives elevated to new forms of power without power. Yet, this empowerment is superficial, as language codes and tastefulness become the primary currency in a world without economic security. These alleged distinct generations, Ys and Zs, often find themselves trapped in a cycle of projecting a kind of powerless power through curated appearances and social theories mixed with a look, all while unknowingly continuing the very traditions they claim to reject. I struggle with these too, but I try to find ways out. Going back to the creativity! Do you know how to measure the awkwardness of such a phenomenon in Arts?

Just imagine a piece of art where you know what the artist's body looks like. If the artist's body is conventionally pleasing with its looks, how you perceive the artwork differs compared to otherwise!

The same applies to all other social categories related to the body of the artist. Gender, sex, race... you name it. How we see the body of the artist always interferes with how we understand the work of art.

The body of the doer is an informative parasite clinging to the artwork.

Of all those categories of body, lookism no one will challenge!

Or maybe an easier example: a performance piece where you can

actually see the artist's body.

If, and only if, the performance still works, still impresses and charms us, and still makes sense with an artist who has a conventionally unattractive body without relying on those dress codes or that certain tastefulness—which is very tasteless—then, and only then, are we looking at a strong piece of art that has real eye-level contact with its audience.

Art doesn't and shouldn't depend on the insecurities of its viewers.

...

If all of these obvious games aren't awkward enough, me pointing it out shouldn't be a problem either.

I know—it's terrifying to put oneself out there, knowing you'll be judged, and people do judge *all* the time. But we should not succumb to these feelings without a second thought.

STEMMI (Aside)

I see! I just wanted to provoke you!

NATIS (Aside)

You succeeded. You know. Although I don't want to be part of this tribal behaviour that screams *I'm THE contemporary artist from Berlin!*—by even only allowing these social dynamics to affect my self-esteem or how I see myself is already enough complicity in this culture!

I'm trying to develop mechanisms or methods in my practice to check myself when I fall into those traps and to stabilise my insecurities so I can live my life as a sane person.

I basically try to deal with these forces that constantly try to dictate and condition who I should be and how I must make my art.

STEMMI (Aside)

Okay! Okay! I understand!

NATIS (Aside)
(laughing)

STEMMI (Aside)

These feelings we all have are exactly what the sector I work for capitalises on. I also have an ambivalent relationship with my job, but I still love it. I still believe there is more to it than these superficialities.

NATIS (Aside)

I enjoy facing my frustrations without swiping them under the carpet. I just wanted to explain what this small and nuanced part of my work is to bring forth: Transforming the anxieties and insecurities into joyful elements of my art-making.

STEMMI (Aside)

Sure!

...

What about you? Will you be visible at the opening as well?

NATIS (Aside)

Yes! I'll be there! We're doing a little performance at the opening with my persona! With Matti —or Hasso.

STEMMI (Aside)

If so, what will *you* wear?

NATIS (Aside)

Just, what I normally wear in my daily life.

STEMMI (Aside)

Okay! If you want subtly to highlight all of these, I think, you should go for a curated look as well!

NATIS (Aside)

What do you mean? I generally wish to look like the guy-next-door.

STEMMI (Aside)

Yeah, you *try*!

You're also making a statement by looking like that.

Even if it's not expensive clothes, you're not really the guy-next-door type either! You still seek attention in your own way!

If we're going to be honest, let's go all the way.

NATIS (Aside)

Right! But believe me, if I didn't attract more attention as a cis Middle Eastern man covering my face and body with long, all-enveloping garments, I would go veiled! However, this is only acceptable for Muslim women.

Like, if not every day, I want to be invisible most days. And the only way

to do that is to look infra-ordinary!

STEMMI (Aside)
(laughing)

I see! We can work on that, too: How to be invisible!

NATIS (Aside)

What are you saying!?

HASSO

I am super confused! Is it working? Will I get what I want?

HASAN

Hasso! Stemmi gets what we—You—want! They have not agreed to work together yet, but it seems like Stemmi is having fun!

HASSO

Well!

STEMMI (Aside)
(shady)

We have to define your statement with *YOUR way of being special* and pronounce it a bit better, even if you want to be overlooked by the audience that day!

NATIS (Aside)
(smiling confused)

Right!?

STEMMI (Aside)

Babe, I'll style your look, too!
The guy-next-door with a little sprinkle of your *einzigartig* arrogance!

NATIS (Aside)
(looking surprised)

STEMMI (Aside)

Genau!

We've got to mix in some trashy brands to balance everything out. If we go too curated, it'll come across as pretentious; if we lean too heavily on pastiche or parody, the tension we want to create will disappear. The looks must remain ambiguous.

DEBUT

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Natis
Hasan
Hank
Hasso
Matti

Screen Scene: On the second floor of the exhibition space at KW Institute for Contemporary Art.

Stage Scene: Minimal decoration. Preferably spaceless and dark. The dramatic characters are seated around a round table facing each other. A single spotlight illuminates the table.

Time: Hasan's second birthday since the German unspeakables in and about the Middle East started.

Dialogue: Most of the text represents the inner voice(s) of the protagonist—the artist with a lowercase *a* or the painter— and is meant to be performed live on the main stage, reflecting the interiority of his mind or the stream of his psychic thoughts. Lines marked with *aside* suggest spoken, phonetic interactions between characters or simple utterances in the protagonist's external physical world, differing from the conventional use of this signifier in classical dramatic texts. In classical texts, *aside* typically refers to a character speaking from the periphery of the main action, privately to themselves or directly to the audience, indicating a mental evaluation or inner thoughts. In this text, however, *aside* signifies lines spoken aloud between characters or as a monologue in the social world. The *aside* lines are expected to be played on film and projected as moving images on a screen beside the main stage.

HASSO WEIß EHRENWERTH: DEBUT

Screen Scene: The scene is the epitome of a White-Cube stage where the audience, the artists and Artists call each other into being unaware of one another's psychic qualities in Berlin. Everything unfolds as an enigma to be registered later in their lives. Natis takes a deep breath to summon all of his passions. As they come, the following dialogue begins and ends with accompanying scores: They walk through the audience and step onto the pedestal where the other half of Hasso stands. They move and expose how their bodily tics communicate with one another. The exchange involves a veil that covers their heads and faces, aligned with the bloody square. They kiss and turn the pedestal upside down. The pull of the painting ajar from the wall that reveals the Archive of Natis to the audience follows the installation of the Book on the lectern and their disappearance in the crowd.

NATIS

Here we go! It's crowded! Perfect for His debut and our official completion. How do you all feel? Let's recap the past year.

HASAN

It was a daunting and rollercoaster but an enriching, unforgettable process to accept and work with Him. But look at this. It is a good presentation.

HANK

First of all, I'm not entirely confident about this whole *completion* thing. And it's uncanny that He resides partially in our bodies and partially in another. However, I realise now that it was a necessary move. Natis has secretly always been envious of those paintings, of brush strokes unrestricted by lines...

NATIS

(shocked)

Wait what? This one is new!

HASAN

(with a joyful tone)

...as he has never found the encouragement to toss our brush on the surface of a canvas with us.

HANK

(mockingly)

....as we could never fully activate the entire arm, the entire body,

starting from the shoulder for him.

NATIS

Oh, stop it! In the long run, this will only benefit the two of you!

HASAN

Yeah! Sure! *For us two.*

HANK

Oh, by the way! Something came to my mind. Can we say that the problem Hasan used to have when he had sensual intimacies with that one organ was a relatable dysfunction? Remember?

HASAN

(sighing)

Oh, you do not have to remind me that, please!

HANK

(smiling)

Could it be the same kind of issue that we have with the arm?

NATIS

Given that the body doesn't have that issue anymore, since I took charge...

HANK

(smiling)

Sorry! But I am asexual. You know. When I am to take the lead in an exhibition showing my paintings, I rather like tucking that organ away. I am super disassociated. You were the source of this bodily dysfunction. That is why I asked! I am curious.

NATIS

...I guess we can say it was a relatable issue, yes.

HASAN

(glaring)

Wasn't it the arm thing an effect of Hassol!? How are these related?

NATIS

That part is still unclear! Anyhoo! It is unbelievable to feel Him now being part of the team. Right? Although you two have always had a way of questioning and have enjoyed very much the journey of developing

strong criticality to deconstruct Him, we had to admit:
We had to come to terms with the fact that we would never completely
be able to get rid of Him.

HANK

Isn't it strange that it all started right on your birthday last year, and
today is your birthday, too? Exactly one year!

HASAN

Though, the German *unspeakables* ignited everything.

...

(rolling eyes)

Look at Him now on that pedestal. *He* is so proud in there, enjoying
Matti very much.

HASSO

*I do losers! Even if I seem busy taking selfies and making posts — I will
respond. Yes, I love Matti's body more than whatever you have over there. I will
always lean towards using his body for My socials.*

HASAN

You're crossing the line again! And, do not forget! You are also not
perfect.

HASSO

You started being a bitch today, not Me!

(with an angelic voice)

*Otherwise, I am fine with the fact that whatever I have is yours, and whatever
you have is Mine.*

HANK

Sure! You talk as whatever it suits You!

NATIS

Okay! It is enough of senseless conversation! You ruined the moment.
Let's go on the pedestal. We have things to do.

MATTI

I love this dramatic conversation.

NATIS

How are you there, Matti?

MATTI
(indifferent)

I am glad that Hasso is taking full charge. I could not do this myself. I don't feel anything right now, but probably I will regret it all tomorrow. I mean, look at these photos!

NATIS
(laughing)

Oh, you won't!
Are we ready?

HANK

What were we doing again?

HASSO
(smiling)

You'll bring your ugly ass here and then, unfortunately, we'll kiss.

NATIS
Remember! We are re-enacting the scene from Hasan's short story. Just follow my lead.
We will stand on the other side of the pedestal next to Hasso. But before we step onto it, let's gather our gadgets:
Is the *Book* here? *Dialogues of Four Passions*?

HASAN

Yep!

NATIS

Hasso, keep doing what You doing!

HASSO
Natürlich!

NATIS

Mega!
Are the *Tamata Candles* here?

HANK

Yes!

NATIS

The Painting Behaviour Modification Tool! Is it here? Yes!

And what about the *Veil*?

HASAN

In the back pocket!

NATIS

Genial!

We should wear it now!

...

Great. Let's go!

...

Before stepping on the pedestal, we put the *Tamata Candles* on the floor and get dressed in the *Tool*. The *Book* is in the left arm.

...

Step on the pedestal now and look deeply in the eyes!

...

Don't laugh! No one makes anyone laugh! Please!

HASAN

It is kind of embarrassing!

NATIS

Shut up!

Concentrate! It is all for the sake of Art!

NATIS | HASAN | HANK | HASSO | MATTI
(laughing)

NATIS

Hasso! We will start rhythmically hitting the Walking Stick on the floor from Your side and jerking the arm from this side once I finish counting to three!

Ready?

One,

Two,

Three.

...

Very well!

...

Now, very slowly, bring the bodies together.

...

Come closer!
Slow!
Keep the rhythm!

...

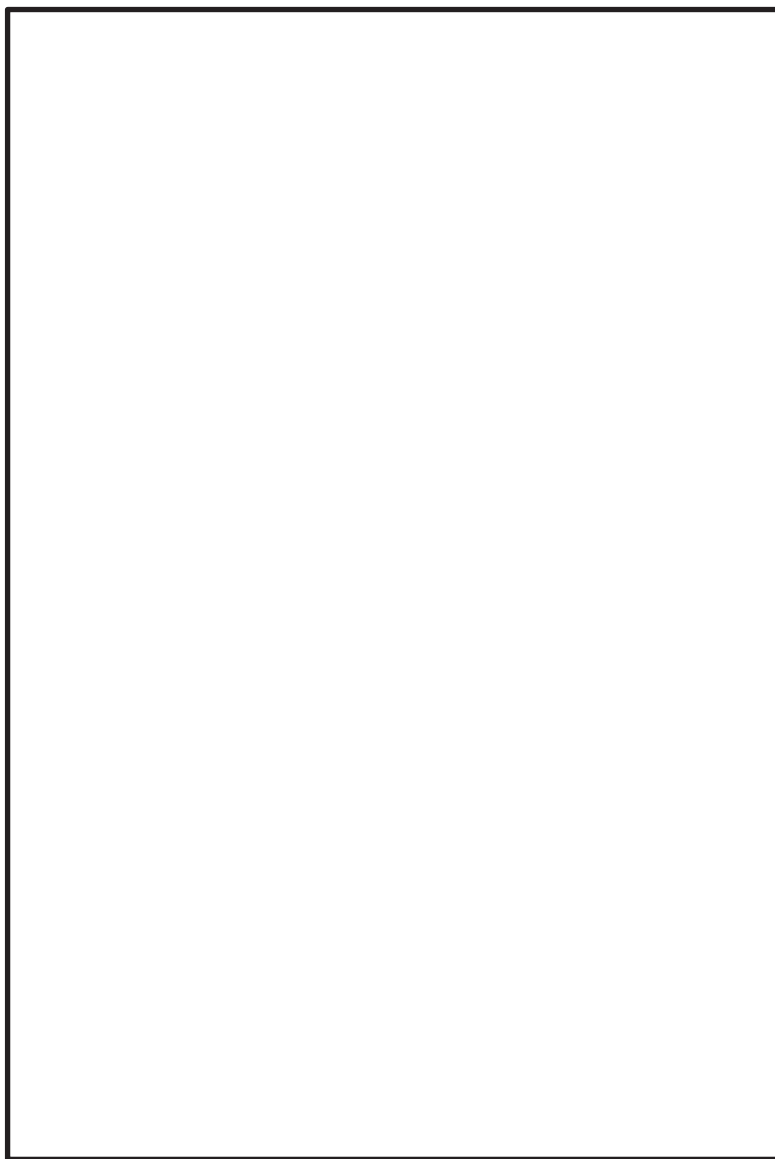
Slow!

...

With each little step forward, the rhythmic moves get less aggressive
and decrease.
Soft!

..

Now even closer.
Our *tics* flirt,
More calmer and gentler.
Lips are about to meet. Four lips.
The warmth coming out of the nostrils. Four holes.
Eyes are now shut. Four eyes.
Our *tics* flirt,
Even more calmer and gentler.
The *Veil* out of the pocket. Two heads, one veiled.
The bloody square on the face. Two faces, one squared.
Now, even closer.
The lips are about to meet. Two holes.
The *Kiss*.
A rugged feeling. Two holes.
Two labium superius oris and two inferius. Four lips.



The transfer of the *Veil*.
Two heads, the other one veiled;
Two faces, the other one squared.
The *Kiss* broke apart.
Two lips, one hole; two lips one hole.
Eyes open. Four eyes.

...

Come off of the pedestal.
Take the *Book* off the hands.
Free of the *Tool*.
Stare. Four eyes.
Count to three.
One,
Two,
Three,
Pedestal upside down to see.
The *Book* never touches the ground!
The *Tool* is in its place!
Towards the painting.
Pull the untitled canvas.
Behind the canvas. One frame.
The Artist gets lost in the crowd.

...

Towards the lectern.
The *Book* on the lectern. One arm; one leg.
The tamatas. One arm; one leg.
Open the *Ceremony* chapter. Page 83.
One poem. *Multiversal*.
The last words: *For every bit of our souls holds a universe within.*

...

Screen Scene: They meet in the bathroom on the second floor and get into one closet.
Stage Scene: They remain seated. No salute. The only spotlight illuminating the round table turns off.

